RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 21st April, 1987/1

Vaisakha, 1909 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

GNLF Ultimatum for the Creation of Gorkhaland

*81. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in his recent letter to the Prime Minister the GNLF leader Mr. Subash Ghishing has given an 'ultimatum' to concede the demand for the creation of Gorkhaland within thirty days and has also reportedly said at a Press Conference that if the demand is denied, the agitation will take a 'different course'; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) A communication from Shri Subhash Ghishing seeking the creation of Gorkhaland within a period of thirty days from 23rd March, 1987 has been received by the Government. The matter was discussed by the Union Home Minister with the Chief Minister, West Bengal in New Delhi on 10th April, 1987. The position is under review and appropriate action will be taken as the situation warrants.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, the situation in Darjeeling district continues to be grave. Violence is erupting every now and then. Innocent people are getting killed. On the one hand Mr. Ghishing is firm in his demand of Gorkhaland and on the other, the Government of India has rightly declined even to consider such a demand. The Minister in his answer says that appropriate action will be taken as the situation warrants. I would like to ask, has not the time come for the Government of India to be a bit more active and to call a meeting with Mr. Ghishing, where the Government of West Bengal may be invited to participate, and to try to find a solution?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, we have met with the Chief Minister of West Bengal. The dialogue is continuing. We will take appropriate action depending on the situation.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: When?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary. When? When are you going to do it?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: How can I say when we will take action and what action?

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, hon. Minister will agree that the broad stand of the Government of India in regard to the GNLF movement is that (1) there shall not be any further division of the State of West Bengal; (2) violence should be stopped immediately and (3) nothing shall be done without consulting the State Government of West Bengal. This constitutes the parameters of the Government of India's stand in regard to the GNLF movement. In this regard, may I know whether it is a fact, according to the newspaper reports, that the Government of India has evolved a package programme for the solution of the Gorkha problem. If so, what are the components of that reported package programme, whether while evolving that package programme Government of West Bengal, particularly the Chief Minister of the State, was consulted in this regard and whether hte Government

of West Bengal has been informed about the reported package programme?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, with great respect to the hon. Member, the word 'package' is a misnomer. We stand by the three principles that we have declared time and again in this House and elsewhere which the hon. Member has correctly quoted. Our endeavour is to find out an area of commonality between the demands raised by Mr. Ghising, the position of the West Bengal Government and the advice given by the Government of India from time to time. If after consideration of these aspects we are able to arrive at a possible solution to this problem, we will certainly commend that solution, but we will do nothing without consulting the West Bengal Government. It will be wrong to describe this exercise as working of a 'package programme'. The right way to describe this exercise is that we are engaged in a genuine and honest exercise to find a solution in consultation with the West Bengal Government.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Sir, I would like to know from the Minister as to the date on which this communication was received from Mr. Subhash Ghishing. Has there been any other demand apart from the demand for the creation of Gorkhaland? What has been the reaction of the Government? Have they replied to him? And will they categorically state that if there is any threat of a different course of action by Mr. Ghishing, the Government of India will suitably reply to him immediately?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, this letter is dated 26th of March, 1987. He demands in this letter....

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: I am not asking that. That is already there in the answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you wanted the date of the letter.

PROF C. LAKSHMANNA: Date of receipt of the letter.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I will give the date presently.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can go ahead.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: The demands are: a separate State of Gorkhaland should be created; the question of citizenship for the aboriginal and settled Gorkhas should be solved on the basis of incorporation of territories, as provided for in Section 7 of the Indian Citizenship Act, 1955 and for this a notification or a gazette should be issued by the Government of India; and a separate Indian Gorkha Regiment exclusively for Indian Gorkhas should be created. These are the broad demands contained in his letter of 26th March.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: What was the reaction of the Government?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The reaction of the Government he has said is, they will look into it. What more can he say?

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: The hon. Minister has said that they have discussed the matter with the Chief Minister of West Bengal. The discussion took place between the Chief Minister and Mr. Buta Singh on 10th April. But on 13th April, Mr. Ghising wrote another letter to the Home Minister which was handed over to Mr. Buta Singh by the emissaries of Mr. Ghishing. So far as I know in that letter—and I would like to get it confirmed from the hon. Minister— the GNLF has issued a threat to the Government of India that until and unless the demand of Gorkhaland is immediately conceded, GNLF will be resorting to armed struggle both against the Central Government and the State Government. I would like to know whether what I have stated about the contents of the letter is correct. If that be a fact that they are going to resort to armed struggle,

what the Central Government is going to do about it. I would like to know whether they have discussed these issues with the Chief Minister of West Bengal, whether they have informed the Chief Minister of West Bengal about the contents of the letter and whether such an armed struggle against the Central Government and the State Government is part of destabilisation that is very much talked of in this House and in this country. In that case what the Central Government is going to do about it and whether they have discussed the matter with the Chief Minister of West Bengal.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, it is true that another letter dated 13th April 1987 from Shri Ghising has been received by the Government. The letter was received in the Ministry on the 16th April, 1987. We are examining the letter.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: What are the contents of the letter?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I have not completed the answer. Sir, the burden of the letter is that in the recently concluded elections, 460 ballot boxes were returned as empty ballot boxes without a single vote being cast in those ballot boxes. This, according to Mr. Ghising, vindicates his position that the people in that area support the position of the GNLF. Therefore he says that the post-election scenario must be carefully studied and his demand must be viewed in the light of, what according to him, is the wish of the people. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him complete the answer.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am only stating what he says. He also says in that letter that the Government of West Bengal have from the very beginning deliberately suppressed the democratic voice of the Gorkhas and are forcing the Gorkhas to resort to an armed struggle.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: This is what we want exactly.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am not hiding anything. Sir, we are examining this matter, I think it will be premature for me to make any comment on this letter. This letter is under examination and we will convey our views at a suitable time.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Have you informed the Chief Minister of West Bengal about it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will give a second supplementary to Mr. Sukomal Sen. or, Mr. Dipen Ghosh, would you like to substitute Mr. Sukomal Sen?... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: The point is that he has conceded my point that they have threatened an armed struggle.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What do you want to know from him?

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: If that is the case, I want to know whether they have taken the Chief Minister of West Bengal into confidence about it and how they are going to face the threat and whether it is part of the destabilization.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): Sir, may I inform the august House that this letter in question was seen by me only yesterday? As my distinguished colleague has already gone on record, it is the stand of the Government of India that we ought not to act unilaterally but we will have to consult the Chief Minister of West Bengal. whatever action, even on this letter, will be taken after consulting the Chief Minister of West Bengal. Today is the first day. Let me state it very clearly that whether it is this threat or any other threat, we will not be influenced by any threat from any quarter—whether it is from Mr. Ghising or anybody. One thing, Sir At the same time, we must realize that if we have to reach at an agreeable solution, a proper atmosphere must

be built and that can be built only if everybody cooperates. We are making attempts so that there is a peaceful environment and a negotiated settlement is found.

SHRI NAGEN SAIKIA: Sir, is it a fact that Mr. Ghising, the leader of GNLF, has recently visited some States of the north-eastern region, including Assam, with a view to getting support from the people of Nepali origin residing in those places permanently and, if so, what is the reaction of the Government?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Sir, Mr. Ghising has been talking about Gorkhas of Indian origin in the Darjeeling area. He has never talked about any other region or any other part of the country in relation to Gorkhas.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, the Minister has admitted that the GNLF has threatened an armed struggle in that part of our country and it is quite well known that in the last several weeks the situation in Darjeeling district, particularly in the hilly region, has sharply deteriorated. A seven-day bandh has been called, people are being murdered, people are being threatened and even the Deputy Director-General of Police of the Government of West Bengal has been attacked. The situation is getting complicated because of constant arms supply from outside. I had drawn the attention of the Home Minister, on a number of occasions in the past, to the fact that the Mirik border is a land border and arms are being smuggled in large quantities. I would like to know what steps the Government is taking to prevent the arms smuggling so that their call for an armed struggle cannot be carried out.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I am quite sure that the West Bengal Government will take care of the situation. As far as we are concerned... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: The border is under your control.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: He should allow me to complete my answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have told you: If I am not satisfied with the answer, either I will put it myself or I will ask you. Therefore, don't disturb.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I hope he will allow me to complete my answer. They do not want an unsatisfactory half-answer, I hope.

Sir, we are sure that the West Bengal Government will be able to take care of the situation. As far as we are concerned, we are providing every possible help to the West Bengal Government. Whenever they have asked us for para-military forces, we have provided the para-military forces. The question of smuggling of arms across the border is indeed a matter which concerns the Central Government. We will take necessary steps in consultation with the State Government. The State and District authorities and the Central Police organizations will have to act together. It is not a case of one throwing the responsibility or the blame at the other. We are conscious of the problem, we will act together and we will take suitable steps.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : माननीय सभापति जी, जब से गोरखालैण्ड का आंदोलन चला है, क्या सरकार को पता है, तब से नेपाल में जो भारतीय नागरिक हैं, उनकी परेशानी बढ़ गई है ? उनको नौकरी नहीं मिल रही है, उनको कारोबार नहीं दिया जा रहा है और भी जितनी पहले सीधी सुविधायें हम भारतवर्ष में दिए हुए थे और नेपाल में जो सुविधा हमारे नागरिकों को थीं, विशेषकर बिहार के बहुत से लोग वहां सब तरह के कारोबार करते चले आ रहे थे, लेकिन आज उनके लिए यह कठिनाई उपस्थित हो गई है ।

क्या सरकार को इसका पता है ?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Yadav, your question is not within the main question.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : जो दूसरी मांग है जानना चाहता हू, वह यह है कि इस प्रकार का नागालैंड में नागालैंड आंदोलन चला, तो नागालैंड बना, मिजोरम का आंदोलन चला तो मिजोराम बना, गोरखा भी इसी तरह से प्रोत्साहित होकर के गोरखालैंड बनाने का आंदोलन कर रहे हैं। इसी तरह की प्रवृत्ति अगर देश में बढ़ती चली गई, तो अपने देश में कितने और लैंड बनेंगे ?

इसलिए इस पर ध्यान रखते हुए इस समस्या का तत्काल निदान करने की कोई तत्परता से व्यवस्था सरकार करेगी ?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Certainly we intend to solve the problem.

SHRI DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: Sir, with rapt attention I have heard the reply of the Minister and also the questions asked by some of the Members from this side and also the Opposition side. Our Minister of State has replied very nicely. The Minister replied that empty boxes had come.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your question?

SHRI DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: It shows that the people of Darjeeling and other 2 sub divisions the Gorkha people are very eager to have a state of their own as their language is quite different from Bengali or Assamese. What is wrong in it, to fight like this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no point.

SHRI DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: I want to know.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is it that you want to know?

SHRI DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: One word. What is the justification that the Government has when it has replied at the time of election democratically that it refused a separate state for Gorkhas?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Sir, these are the issues of national importance and cannot be left to local, parochial ideas. Therefore, I want to state once for all that no parochial issues can be allowed to divide the country and divide the States. Let it be understood throughout the country.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, our Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr. Chidambaram, has stated that the latest letter which the Central Government has received from Mr. Ghishing is under examination, in which there is a threat of taking recourse to armed struggle. And the specific reply of the Minister was that that threat was also being examined. But my question is: What is the *prima facie* reaction to that threat?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, he is putting words in my mouth. I said, "The letter is under examination. The letter was received on the 16th of April. The Home Minister has seen it. We have to have consultations within the Government. It will be premature for me to offer any comment or view at this stage."

SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT: Sir, much earlier, when Gorkhas had not started the agitation for a separate homeland, they had demanded inclusion of Nepali in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. I want to ask the Minister why that very simple demand was ignored.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, we have answered this question several times both in this House and in the other House. We believe that the development of a language does not depend upon its inclusion in the

Eighth Schedule. We realise that this is an emotive issue as far as the people of that area are concerned. The position now is that this is not one of the demands which Mr. Ghising is now projecting, in the forefront. In fact, he has left it to other organisations.

We think that the basic political questions must be resolved. And if in the process of the resolution of those questions, the issue does come up, we can examine this issue also. But let me say we do not believe that the development of a language depends upon its inclusion in the 8th Schedule. I have repeatedly pointed out that there are only two articles of the Constitution which deal with the 8th Schedule and neither of the two articles has any impact upon either the development or promotion of the language or the cultural and linguistic identity of the people.

Statehood for Goa

*82. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:†
SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any final decision regarding the question of granting Statehood to Goa; and

(b) if so, by when legislation to this effect is expected to be brought before Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) Not yet, Sir.

(b) Soon after the final decision is taken, necessary legislation to give effect to it will be brought before Parliament.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Pramod Mahajan.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन : सभापति जी, गोआ राज्य की आज की भौगोलिक सीमाओं ने पोर्तगीज की गुलामी के इतिहास को शाश्वत बना रखा है। दीव-दमन गोआ से लगभग 8 सौ किलोमीटर दूरी पर है । आज भी गोआ ही से जुड़ा हुआ है। गोआ की भाषा कोंकणी और मराठी होते हुए दीव-दमन की भाषा गुजराती है इसलिए गोआ को राज्य का दर्जा देते समय दीव-दमन को गुजरात से जोड़ देना ज्यादा उचित एवं न्यायोचित होगा । मैं गृह मंत्री महोदय से पूछना चाहता हू कि गोआ को राज्य का दर्जा देते समय क्या गोआ की भौगोलिक सीमायें आज जैसी ही होंगी या दीव-दमन को गुजरात के साथ जोड़ा जाएगा और इस विधान सभा की सम्भावित सदस्य संख्या क्या होगी ?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: It is just having on a headache without a head. I explained to the hon. Member that the Government is in serious consideration because this is a long-cherished desire of the people of the Union territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. Our Prime Minister and the Government have responded well to the longcherished desire of the people of Goa, Daman and Diu. Now the question is that the whole process has to be worked out. Then we shall come to a final decision.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: It seems the Government is having headache without head.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: He has not understood the question, Sir.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन : मैं दूसरा प्रश्न यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि प्रथम राज्य पुनर्रचना आयोग के बाद हमने राज्य की श्रेणियां समाप्त कर केवल राज्यों को राज्य और केन्द्र शासित प्रदेशों में रखा। धीरे-धीरे सरकार सभी केन्द्र शासित प्रदेशों को राज्य का दर्जा दे रही है लेकिन दुर्भाग्य से इस संबंध में कोई मापदण्ड या पूर्ण विचार दिखाई नहीं देता है। 5-5 लाख के मिजोरम, अरुणा-